

**Healthy Families Program
2004 Report of Consumer Survey of
Dental Plans**



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Table of Contents

Survey Method	1
Overall Ratings	3
Composite Ratings	9
Scores and Satisfaction	17

2004 Report of Consumer Survey of Dental Plans

This report summarizes results from the third annual dental consumer satisfaction survey for the Healthy Families Program. This survey is a key component of the quality monitoring activities for the program. In addition to being an important tool in monitoring quality and access to services that HFP subscribers experience with their dental plans, subscribers receive this information during the Open Enrollment period and in the program handbook which gives them additional facts about their dental plan choices. To date, California is the only state that administers this survey which does not allow for comparability to other state programs.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

MRMIB conducted the survey through an independent survey vendor, DataStat, Inc., using the instrument developed by the CAHPS[®] consortium¹ and modified for the Healthy Families Program. The instrument was based on the Child Medicaid version of the Consumer Assessment of Health Plan Survey (CAHPS[®]) 2.0H which contains 70 questions pertaining to nine aspects of care: access to dental care, customer service, communication of providers, and quality and satisfaction of dental plan services and dental care received. Responses to the questions have been summarized into four global ratings and five composite scores. The global ratings included ratings of dental plan, dental care, regular dentist and dental specialist. The composite scores addressed getting needed dental care, getting dental care quickly, how well dentists communicate, helpfulness and courteousness of dental office staff and customer service.

Datastat, Inc. conducted the survey over an eight week period using a single mode (mail-only) 5 step protocol between the months of September and December. This consisted of a pre-notification mailing, an initial survey mailing and a reminder postcard to all respondents, and a second survey mailing and second reminder postcard to non-respondents. The pre-notification and follow-up correspondences were developed based on recommended samples from the CAHPS[®] 2.0H protocol. Because the D-CAHPS[®] survey is still under development, the protocol for the telephone follow-up is not available for this survey.

¹The CAHPS[®] consortium was established by the Agency for Health Care Policy and Research (now known as Agency for Health Care Research and Quality). The consortium consists of the RAND Corporation, Harvard Medical School and the Research Triangle Institute.

The survey was conducted in five languages – English, Spanish, Cantonese, Korean and Vietnamese. Families selected for the survey received the survey in English, and Spanish, Cantonese, Korean or Vietnamese if one of these languages was designated as the primary language on the families' HFP application.

DataStat, Inc. selected a random sample of families using a modified version of the NCQA (National Committee for Quality Assurance) protocols for conducting the CAHPS® 2.0H survey. Families with children between the ages of 4 and 18 years as of June 30, 2003 who were continuously enrolled in their dental plan for at least 12 months were eligible to participate in the survey. Families with children under the age of 4 were not selected for the survey because of the likelihood that these children would not have seen a dentist.

Of the families who were eligible for the survey, only those families who did not receive a previous HFP consumer survey for health plans were selected. This was to ensure that no family was burdened with having to complete a health and dental survey in the same year. The number of families selected for the survey from each dental plan participating in the HFP was 900. A total of 4,500 surveys were distributed. The number of families who were selected for the survey and the distribution of language surveys for each participating dental plan is presented in Table 1.

Table 1 – Distribution of Surveys in Each Language Group by Dental Plan

Dental Plan	Total	E	S	C	K	V
Access Dental	900	357	483	25	22	13
Delta Dental	900	410	404	48	19	19
Health Net Dental	900	352	477	45	17	9
Premier Access	900	604	293	2	1	0
Universal Care Dental	900	331	529	17	8	15
Total	4,500	2,054	2,186	137	67	56

E= English S=Spanish C=Cantonese K=Korean V=Vietnamese

SURVEY RESULTS: OVERALL RATINGS

All plans met the minimum requirement to yield an adequate sample size to complete the survey and allow for the analysis of plan comparisons. The minimum number of responses needed for the analysis was 411 completed surveys which is the target number that NCQA defines for accreditation purposes. This goal allows for at least 100 responses per question to yield a comparative analysis and is comparable to most types of statistical testing.

The following pages contain the HFP program and individual plan survey overall ratings and composite results from the 2003 D-CAHPS® 1.0 survey. The responses to the survey were summarized into four rating and five composite questions. Responses that indicate a positive experience were considered achievement scores as identified below.

Rating Question Responses: For the four rating questions, a 10-point scale was used to assess overall experience with dental plans, providers, specialists and dental care. For this scale, “0” represents the worst and “10” represents the best. The achievement scores for these questions were determined by the percentage of families responding to each question using an 8, 9, or 10 rating. Individual plan scores for the 2003 survey are compared with the overall program score in 2003 and 2002 and a *benchmark*. This benchmark is based on the highest score achieved by a participating dental plan with a minimum of 75 responses.

Between 65 and 71 percent of families gave high ratings for *Dental Care*, *Dental Plan*, *Personal Dentist* and *Dental Specialist*. The rating for *Dental Specialist* had the highest achievement score for 2003 (71 percent). The rating of *Dental Specialist* also had the highest achievement score for 2002 (75 percent). Although the 2003 score (71 percent) was lower than the 2002 score (75 percent), the differences in scores were not statistically significant.

The rating of *Dental Plan* had the lowest achievement score for 2003 (65 percent). The rating of *Dental Plan* also had the lowest achievement score for 2002 (65 percent). This rating also had the widest range of scores among plans from 58 to 81 percent.

Of the ratings achieved by individual plans, the highest score was achieved by Delta Dental for overall rating of *Dental Plan* (81 percent). The lowest score obtained was by Universal Care for the overall rating of *Dental Plan* (58 percent).

For each rating question, some plans had scores that were consistently higher or lower than the HFP overall score. Access

Dental and Universal Care Dental had 2 to 3 scores that were statistically significantly below the program average. Premier Access and Delta Dental had at least 2 scores that were statistically significantly above the program average. These results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 – Statistically Significantly Higher and Lower than HFP Overall Ratings Scores

Dental Plan	Overall Dental Plan	Overall Dental Care	Overall Personal Dentist	Overall Dental Specialist
Access Dental	▼	▼		
Delta Dental		▲	▲	
Health Net Dental		▼	▼	
Premier Access		▲	▲	
Universal Care Dental	▼	▼	▼	

▲ = Statistically significantly higher than HFP Overall Rating Scores

▼ = Statistically significantly lower than HFP Overall Rating Scores

Table 3 shows changes in plan scores that have increased or decreased 4 or more percentage points from 2002 to 2003. Health Net Dental showed improvement in 2 areas. Access Dental had scores decline in 1 area and Premier Access had scores decline in 3 areas.

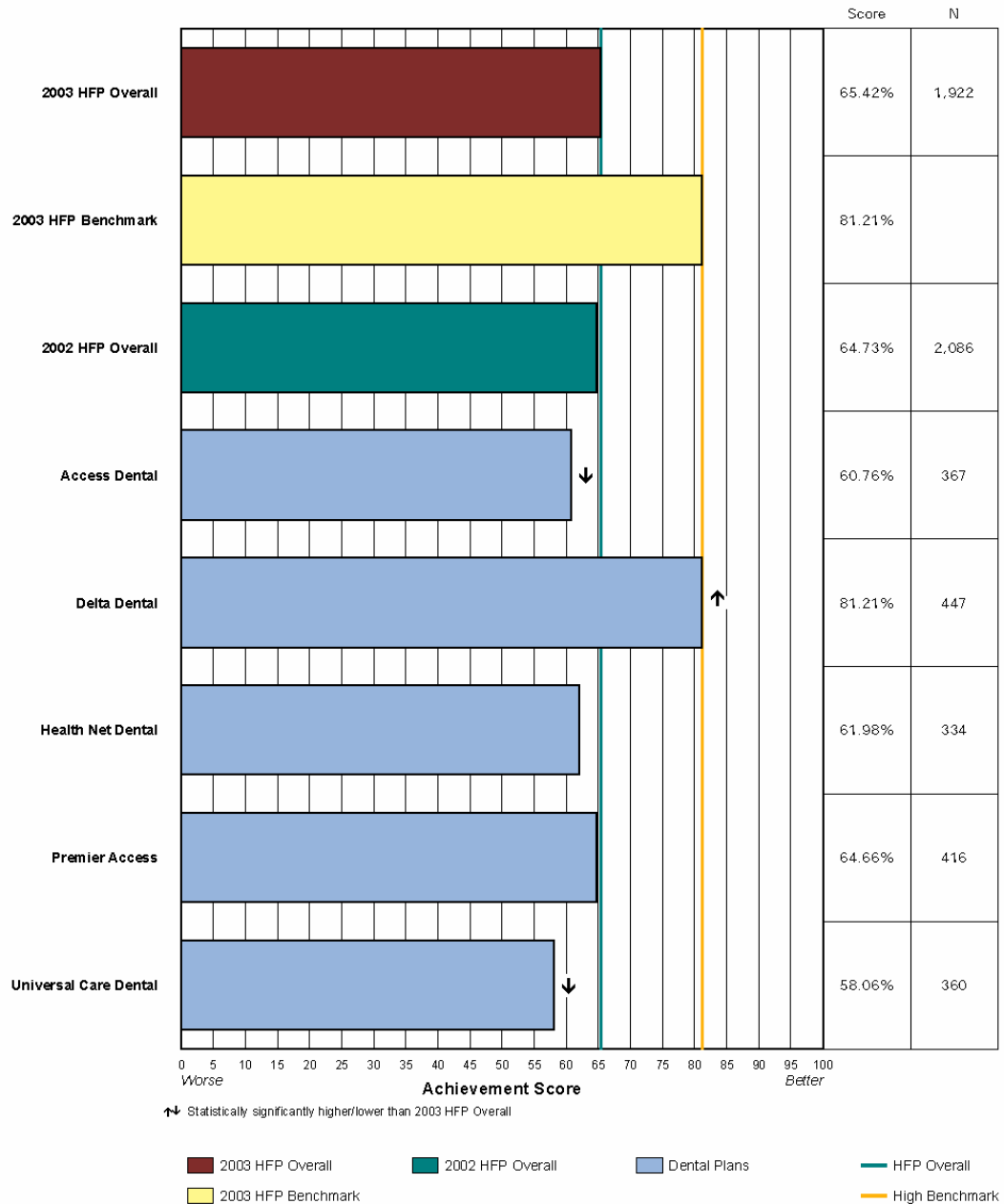
Table 3 – Plan Performance Changes in Overall Ratings 2002-2003

Dental Plan	Overall Dental Plan	Overall Dental Care	Overall Personal Dentist	Overall Dental Specialist
Access Dental				↓ (4%)
Delta Dental				
Health Net Dental		↑ (6%)	↑ (5%)	
Premier Access		↓ (5%)	↓ (6%)	↓ (10%)
Universal Care Dental				

Pages 6-9 present the individual scores for each plan for each rating.

Overall Ratings

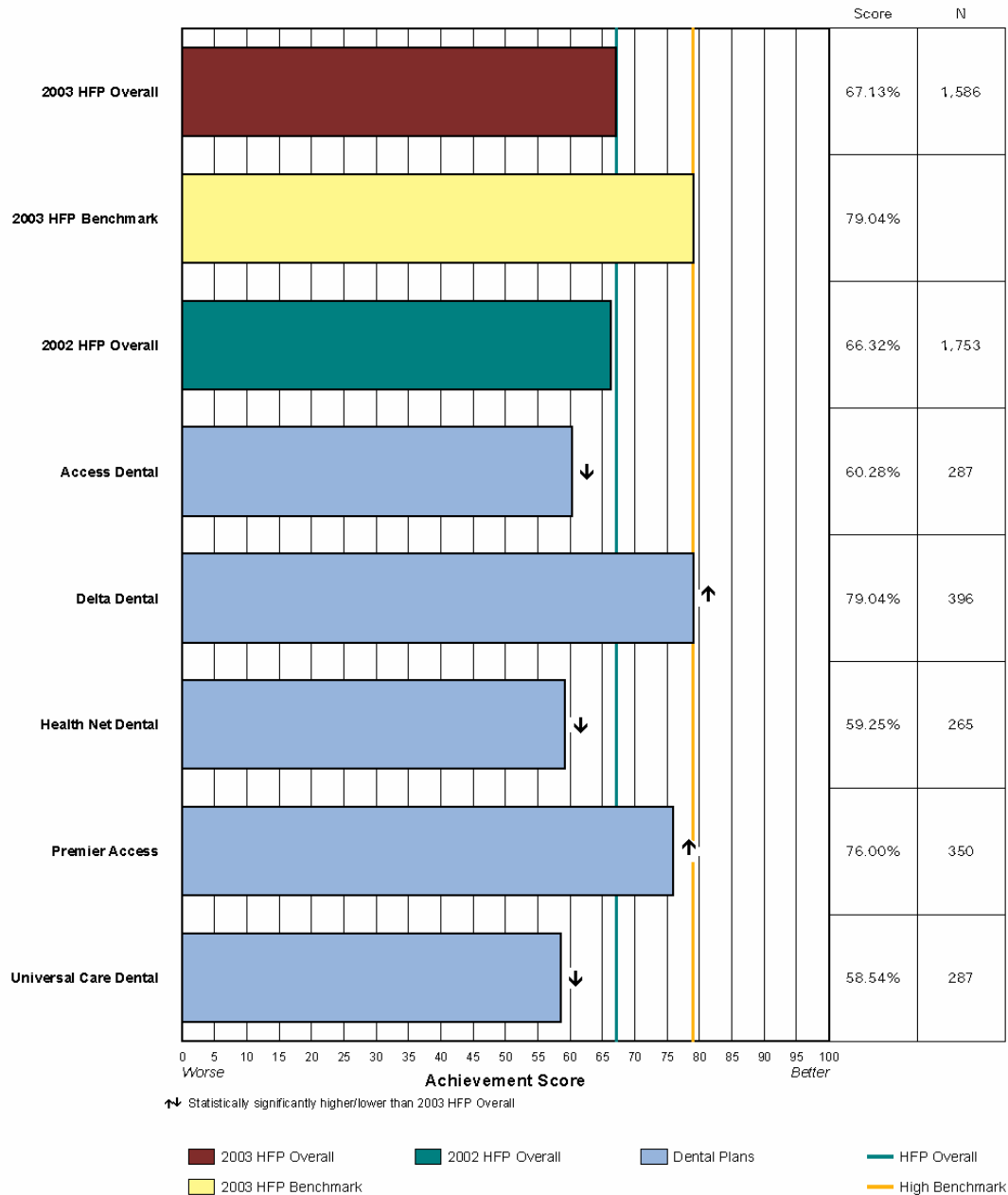
Q52. Overall rating of dental plan



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Overall Ratings

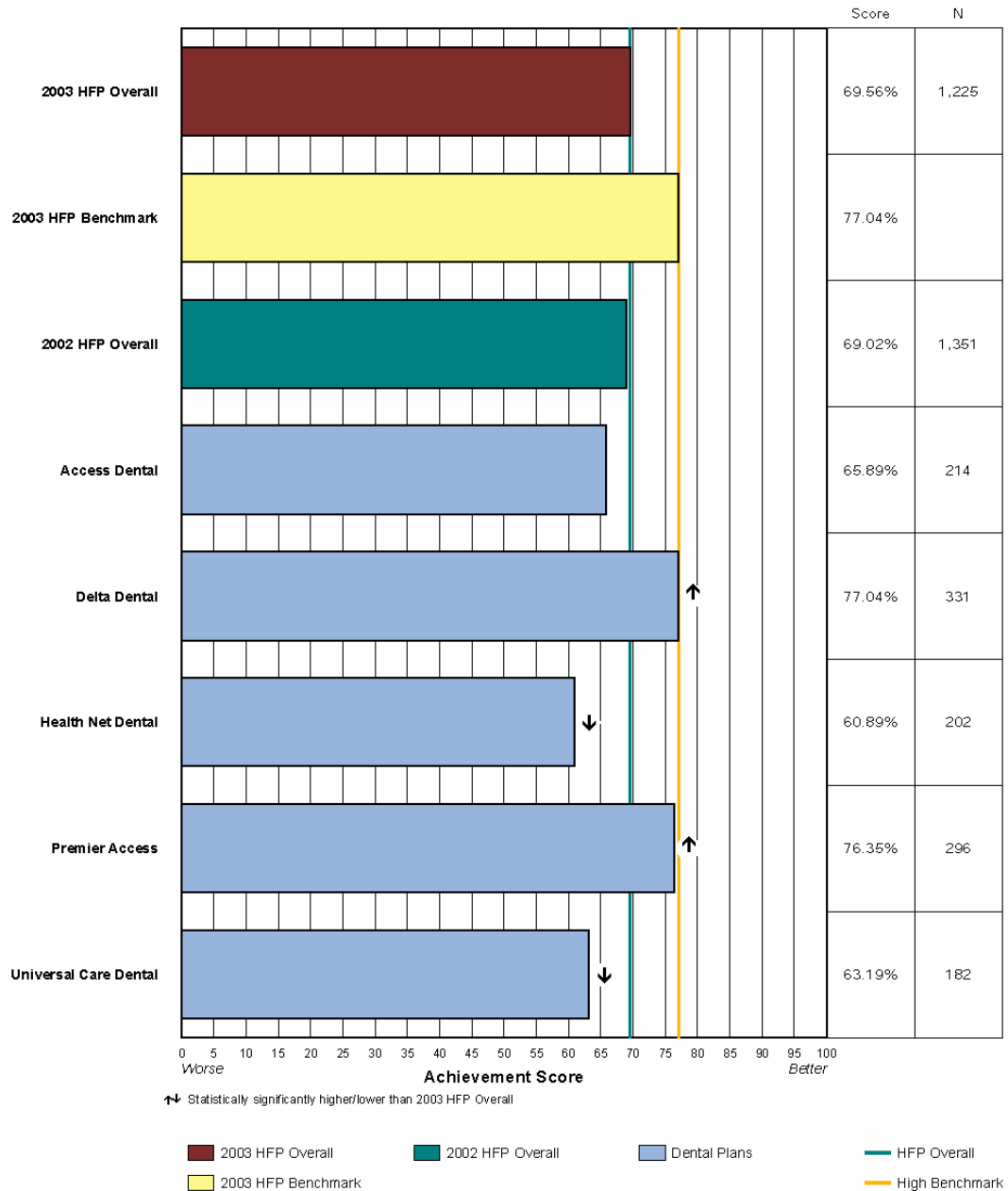
Q40. Overall rating of dental care



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Overall Ratings

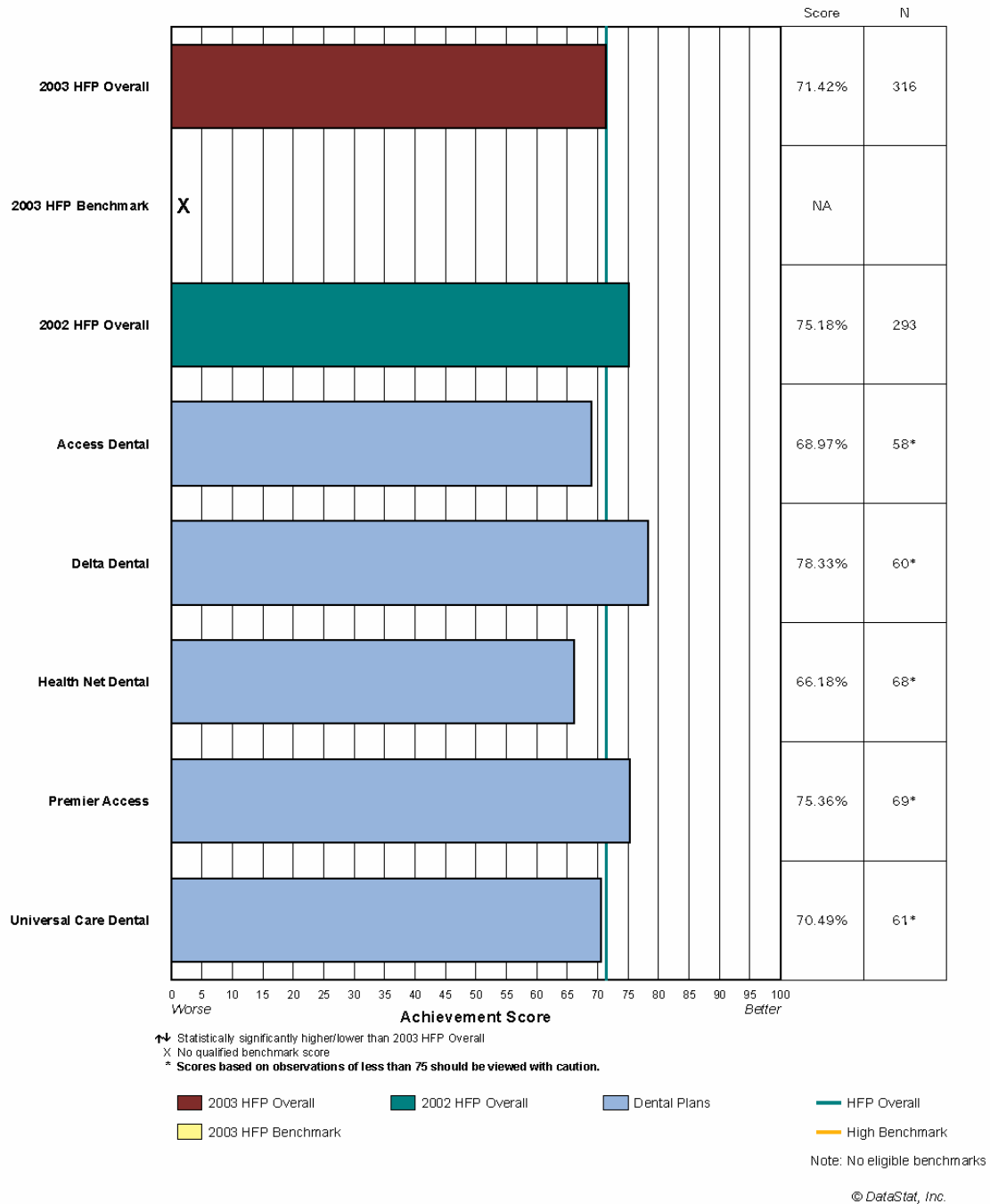
Q9. Overall rating of personal dentist



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Overall Ratings

Q14. Overall rating of dental specialist



SURVEY RESULTS: COMPOSITE SCORES

Composite Score Results: For the composite score, questions that are related to the same broad domain of performance are grouped. For example, *Getting Dental Care Quickly* includes questions about getting advice by phone, how soon appointments were scheduled and the time spent waiting in the dentist's office. The achievement score for each composite is determined by the percentage of families who respond positively to each question that comprises the composite. A response is considered positive if the answers are "not a problem" for the questions comprising the *Getting Needed Dental Care* and *Customer Service* composites, and "usually" and "always" for the *Getting Care Quickly*, *How Well Doctors Communicate* and *Courteous and Helpful Office Staff* composites.

The survey questions that comprise each composite score are listed below.

Getting Needed Dental Care

- Able to get your child a dental office or clinic you are happy with
- Able to get a referral to a specialist for child
- Able to get the care for child believed necessary
- No problems with delays in child's dental care while awaiting approval

Getting Dental Care Quickly

- Usually or always got help of advice needed for child
- Child usually or always got an appointment to fill or treat a cavity as soon as wanted
- Child usually or always got an appointment for routine care as soon as wanted
- Child usually or always got needed care for mouth pain or dental problem as soon as wanted
- Child never or sometimes waited more than 15 minutes in dentist's office or clinic

How Well Dentists Communicate

- Dentists usually or always listened carefully
- Never or sometimes had a hard time speaking with or understanding the dentist because you spoke different
- Dentists usually or always explained things in an understandable way
- Usually or always got an interpreter when needed
- Child usually or always got an interpreter when needed

- Child never or sometimes had a hard time speaking with or understanding dentist because he or she spoke different languages
- Dentists usually or always explained things to child in an understandable way
- Dentists usually or always spent enough time with child

Courteous and Helpful Office Staff

- Usually or always treated with courtesy and respect by office staff
- Office staff usually or always helpful

Customer Service

- Able to find or understand information in written materials
- Able to get help needed when you called child's dental plan's customer service

The results of the survey indicated that at least 82 percent of families responded positively to two of the composite questions. The composite ratings of *How Well Dentists Communicate* and *Courteous and Helpful Office Staff* had the highest number of positive responses (82 percent). The composite ratings of *How Well Dentists Communicate* and *Courteous and Helpful Office Staff* also had the highest number of positive responses for 2002 (81 percent). The increase in the composite rating of *How Well Dentists Communicate* from 2002 to 2003 is statistically significant.

The three composite ratings that had less than 82 percent of families responding positively were *Getting Needed Dental Care*, *Getting Dental Care Quickly* and *Customer Service*. The composite rating of *Customer Service* had the lowest percentage of positive responses for 2003 (56 percent). The composite rating of *Customer Service* also had the lowest percentage of positive responses for 2002 (53 percent). The difference in the composite rating of *Customer Service* from 2002 to 2003 is not statistically significant.

With respect to individual dental plan scores, Premier Access achieved the highest composite score among all dental plans. Ninety-one percent of Premier Access' subscribers responded positively to *How Well Dentists Communicate* and *Courteous and Helpful Office Staff*. Universal Care achieved the lowest composite score among all plans. Forty-nine percent of their subscribers responded positively to the *Getting Dental Care Quickly* composite.

For each composite question, some plans had scores that were consistently higher or lower than the HFP overall score. Access Dental and Universal Care Dental had at least 3 scores that were

statistically significantly below the program average. Premier Access and Delta Dental had at least 3 scores that were statistically significantly above the program average. These results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4 – Statistically Significantly Higher and Lower than HFP Overall Composite Scores

Dental Plan	Getting Needed Dental Care	Getting Dental Care Quickly	How Well Dentists Communicate	Courteous & Helpful Office Staff	Customer Service
Access Dental		▼	▼	▼	
Delta Dental	▲	▲	▲	▲	
Health Net Dental			▼		
Premier Access Dental		▲	▲	▲	
Universal Care Dental	▼	▼	▼	▼	

▲ = Statistically significantly higher than HFP Overall Rating Scores
▼ = Statistically significantly lower than HFP Overall Rating Scores

With respect to changes in plans scores, 1 plan (Health Net Dental) showed improvement in 4 areas. Premier Access Dental and Universal Care Dental showed improvement in 1 area. Table 5 details the changes in plan scores from 2002 to 2003. Only those changes that were 4 percentage points or more are shown.

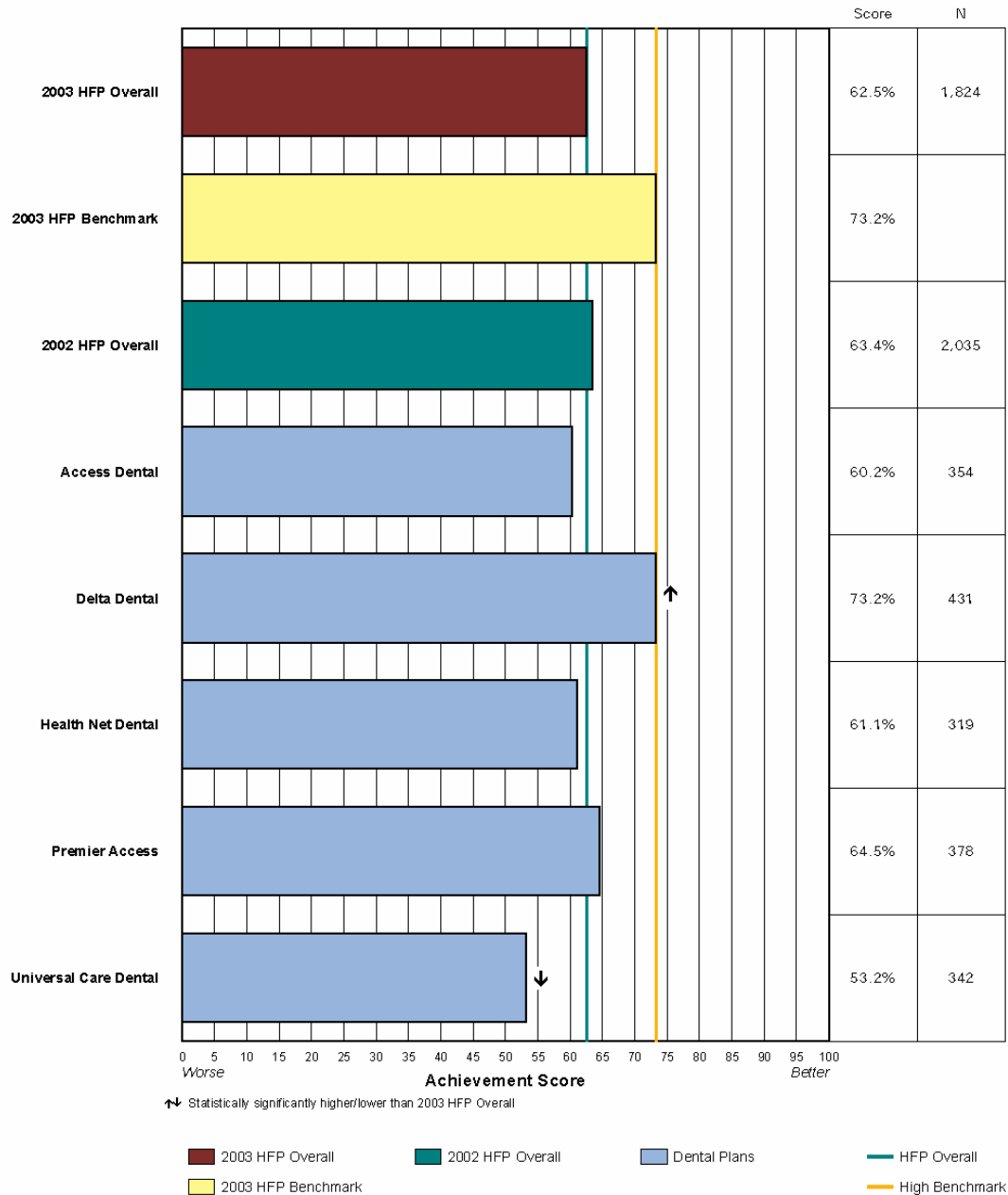
Table 5 – Plan Performance Changes in Overall Composite Scores 2002-2003

Dental Plan	Getting Needed Dental Care	Getting Dental Care Quickly	How Well Dentists Communicate	Courteous & Helpful Office Staff	Customer Service
Access Dental					
Delta Dental					
Health Net Dental		↑ (6%)	↑ (5%)	↑ (7%)	↑ (13%)
Premier Access Dental					↑ (5%)
Universal Care Dental				↑ (5%)	

The individual plan scores for all composites are shown on pages 13-18.

Getting Needed Dental Care

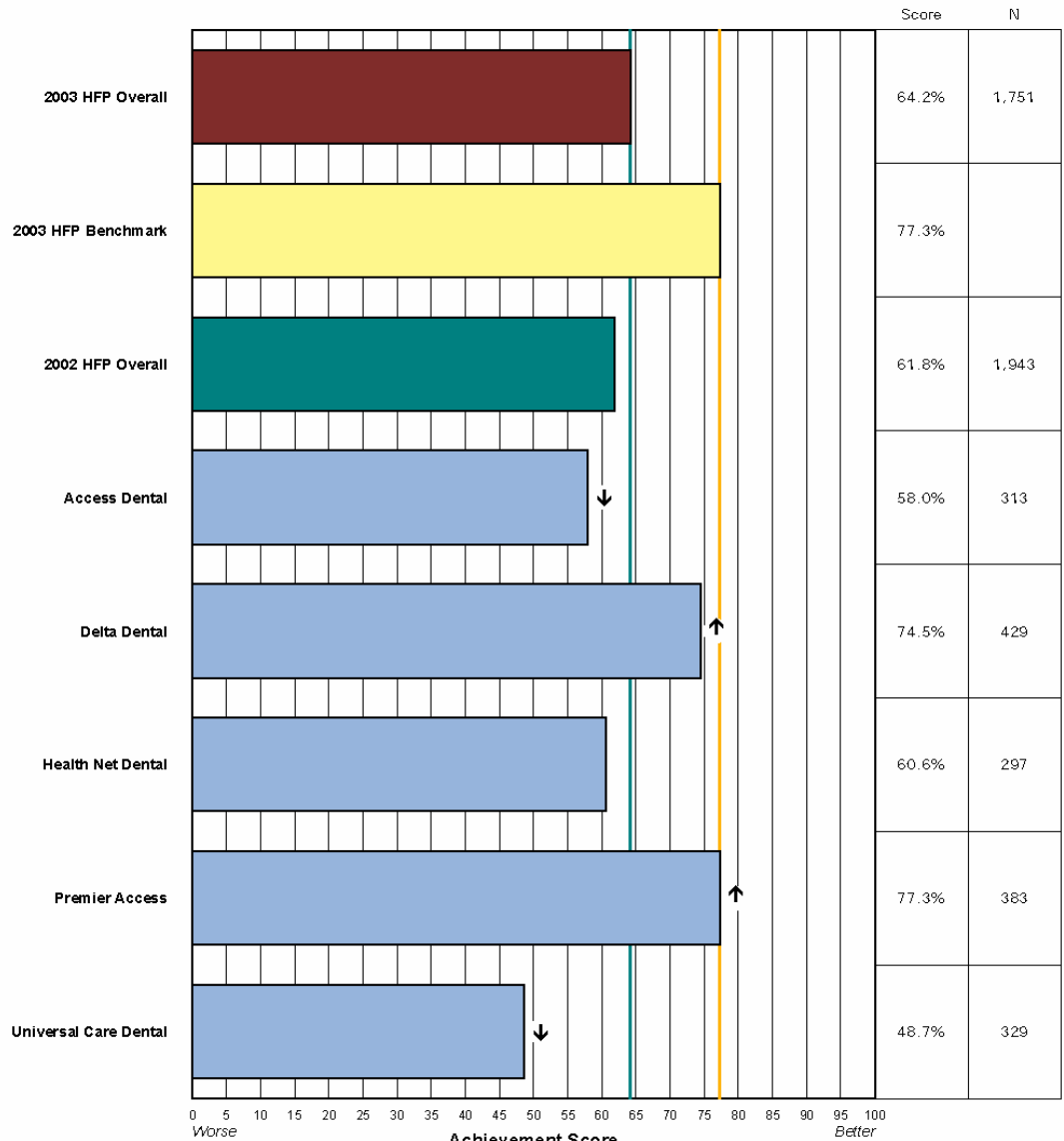
Composite Score



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Getting Dental Care Quickly

Composite Score



2003 HFP Overall

2002 HFP Overall

Dental Plans

HFP Overall

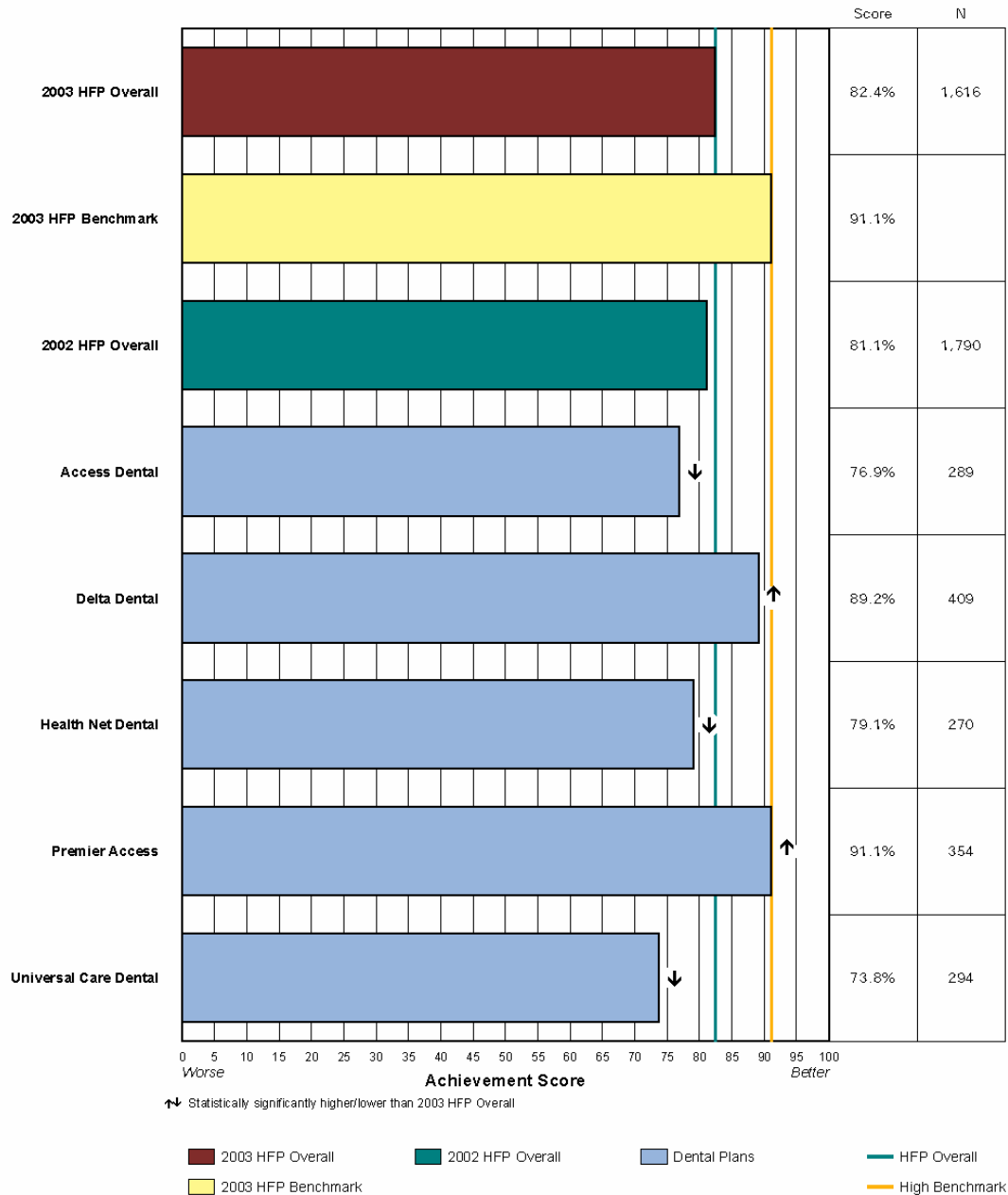
2003 HFP Benchmark

High Benchmark

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How Well Dentists Communicate

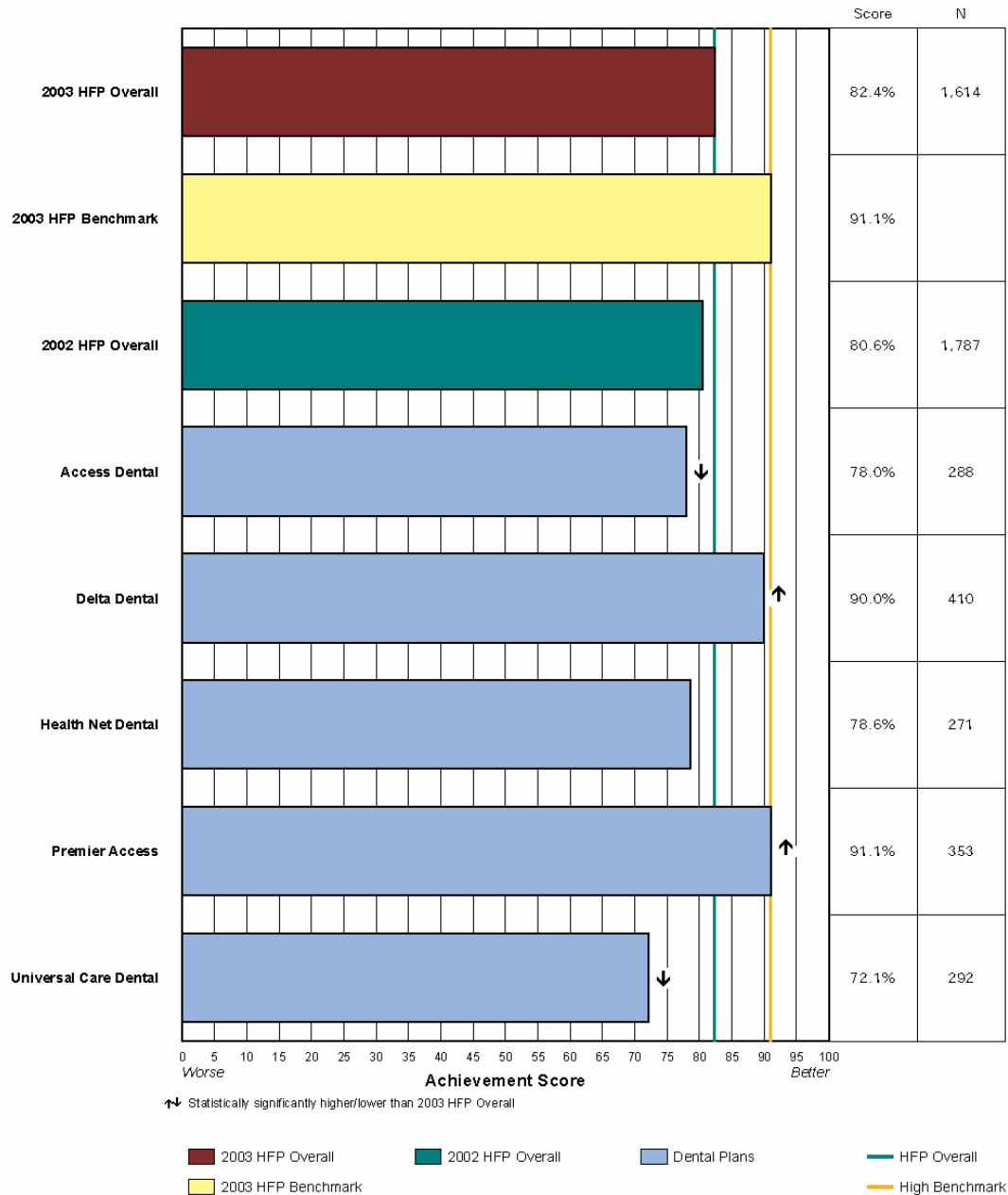
Composite Score



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Courteous and Helpful Office Staff

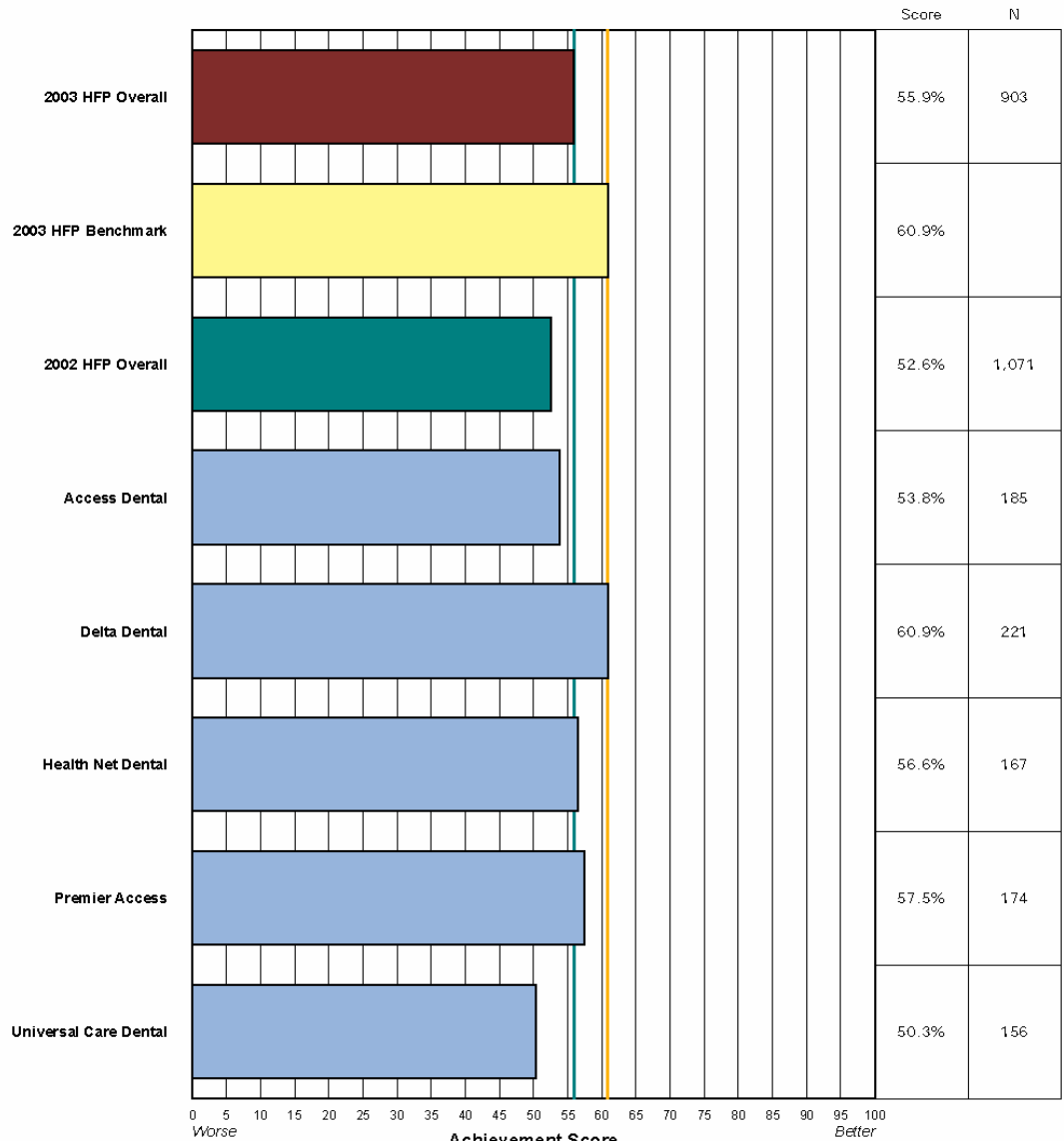
Composite Score



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Customer Service

Composite Score



2003 HFP Overall

2002 HFP Overall

Dental Plans

HFP Overall

2003 HFP Benchmark

High Benchmark

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SURVEY RESULTS: CORRELATION OF SCORES AND SATISFACTION

In addition to the overall and individual plan scores, DataStat, Inc. conducted three additional analyses to illustrate the program's strongest and weakest areas of performance and the top ten questions that were highly correlated with satisfaction. The areas of strongest and weakest performance are based on the highest and lowest achievement score for a particular question. There were five items that had more than 83 percent of subscribers responding positively. There were 6 items that had less than 80 percent of subscribers responding positively with one item as low as 60 percent. In the areas of weakest performance, all items were highly correlated with satisfaction. Tables 6 and 7 outline the areas of strongest and weakest performance.

A correlation co-efficient of .40 or greater indicates a relatively high correlation with plan satisfaction. Coefficients less than 0.40 indicate a low correlation with plan satisfaction. All areas shown in Table 7 have a high correlation with plan satisfaction.

Table 6 – Areas of Strongest Performance

Question	HFP Achievement Score	Correlation with overall Satisfaction (Yes or No)	Composite Group
Child never or sometimes had a hard time speaking with or understanding dentist because he or she spoke different languages	95.7%	N (0.05)	How Well Dentists Communicate
Never or sometimes had a hard time speaking with or understanding dentist because you spoke different languages	89.4%	N (0.07)	How Well Dentists Communicate
Dentists usually or always showed respect	87.2%	N (0.35)	How Well Dentists Communicate
Usually or always treated with courtesy and respect by office staff	86.3%	N (0.33)	Courteous & Helpful Office Staff
Dentists usually or always explained things to child in an understandable way	83.0%	N (0.29)	How Well Dentists Communicate

Table 7 – Areas of Weakest Performance

Question	HFP Achievement Score	Correlation with overall Satisfaction (Yes or No)	Composite Group
Child usually or always got needed care for mouth pain or dental problem as soon as wanted	60.8%	Y (0.46)	Getting Dental Care Quickly
Overall rating of dental care	67.1%	Y (0.57)	Overall Ratings
Usually or always got help or advice needed for child	68.3%	Y (0.43)	Getting Dental Care Quickly
Overall rating of personal dentist	69.6%	Y (0.49)	Overall Ratings
Office Staff usually or always helpful	78.4%	Y (0.43)	Courteous & Helpful Office Staff
Dentists usually or always listened carefully	78.6%	Y (0.42)	How Well Dentists Communicate

There were a few other areas that were moderately correlated with satisfaction. These are shown in Table 8.

Table 8 - Other Items Correlated with Satisfaction

Question	HFP Achievement Score	Correlation with Satisfaction (Yes or No)	Composite Group
Overall rating of dental specialist	71.4%	Y (0.45)	Overall Ratings
Dentists usually or always spend enough time with child	76.3%	Y (0.40)	How Well Dentists Communicate
No problems with delays in child's dental care while awaiting approval	73.0%	N (0.37)	Getting Needed Dental Care

(Note: A correlation coefficient of 0.40 or greater indicates a relatively high correlation with plan satisfaction. Coefficients less than 0.40 indicate a low correlation with plan satisfaction.)

CONCLUSIONS

The information presented in this report represents a ground-breaking effort to understand the experience families have with dental plans. Because the D-CAHPS® survey instrument is new, comparative data is not yet available.

The results of the survey show significant variations in the scores between the dental plan types. Most plans showed improvement in at least one area from 2002 results to 2003. As seen in last year's report, the open access exclusive provider organization (EPO) dental plans had higher scores than the dental maintenance organization (DMO) plans. Further study is required to understand the dramatic differences in these results.

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